

## The deficit dance and the 2012 election

By Jennifer Rubin

The maneuvering in response to the [results of the president's debt commission](#) has begun. The proposed mix of tax rate reductions, spending restraint and adjustments to Social Security have made previously controversial Republican positions the stuff of responsible center-right consensus. No wonder Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), Sen. Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.) have such [kind words](#) for the commission's work.

The reactionary left, nicely embodied in the personage of Illinois Democratic Rep. [Jan Schakowsky](#) (who at some point must realize she was there to have her views repudiated by centrist Democrats), is appalled at the plan. When a freeze on federal workers pay is regarded as an abomination and [capitulation to the right](#), you understand how ominous the plan must seem to liberals.

If you're a wagering person, here's a relatively safe bet: The commission won't come close to 14 votes (to be honest, that was never in the cards) and Obama will continue to demonstrate an [utter lack of leadership](#). But Republicans will create a budget proposal combining elements of the fiscal commission plan, the equally dramatic [Ryan-Rivlin plan](#) for entitlement reform, and a plan to repeal Obamacare. That budget will pass the House and go to the Senate, where a handful of Senate Democrats perhaps will join the Republicans, while the left wing of the Democratic caucus filibusters. Republicans will chortle at the newfound fondness for Senate procedure. But that formula then sets the stage for 2012. The Erskin/Bowles-Ryan/Rivlin -no Obamacare plan vs. Schakowsky's. That's a dream scenario for the GOP. Oh, and if it could sucker punch the administration into only a *partial* extension of the Bush tax cuts (this is a "throw me into the briar patch" moment, says a senior House Republican aide), that would be almost too much to hope for.